The University of Chicago

THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX SOLDIER AND PHILOSOPHE

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
JUNE, 1942

BY
GEORGE BARR CARSON, JR.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
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APPENDIX III

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS, 1780-1788

The published works of the Chevalier de Chastellux cover a rather wide variety of subjects. His musical and dramatic criticism, his philosophical speculation on the sources of public welfare and the idea of progress, and his analysis of the economic consequences of the discovery of America show the cosmopolitan interests of an eighteenth century philosophe. The journal of his travels in North America also suggests the disciple of the Enlightenment; his curiosity about the manners and customs of a part of the world generally considered a source book on primitivism, his scientific observation of flora and fauna, his inquisitiveness with respect to people, show the man of letters rather than the soldier. Yet, by a paradox which Chastellux, with his fondness for paradoxes, might have appreciated, it was as a soldier that he went to America, and as a soldier that he performed an important and necessary service in America. It is true that there are many passages in his Voyages about military events, but the battles or campaigns which he describes are always those in which he had no part; most of them, in fact, were fought before he arrived in America.

The following documents throw much light, not only on the chevalier's character, but on his military activities. In these letters there is a glimpse of the spirit of intrigue which pervaded the higher ranks of the French army; Chastellux's relationships with his fellow officers in Rochambeau's corps, with the royal ministers at Versailles, and with prominent American leaders are revealed. He also demonstrates his knowledge of and interest in the practical problems of contemporary politics, whereas in his published works this aspect of his career, as well as his own military activities in North America, were wholly neglected. And finally, there are some interesting details about his private life.

In the material here presented there are more letters of

Chastellux than the total of his previously published correspondence. It is hardly surprising that there are so few Chastellux letters known. He was a very poor correspondent; he wrote irregularly and--especially after he returned to France--infrequently even to Washington, to whom half of these letters were addressed. In large part Chastellux's letters are to men living at such a distance that he expected to see them seldom or never. Probably many letters were written to people who did not preserve their papers so carefully as Washington, though it seems unlikely that Chastellux wrote many letters to his French friends when he was in France. He was really more interested in talking than writing; for him, meeting his friends in the Parisian salons was infinitely more satisfactory than conversing by letter, which involved some manual labor.

Chastellux could not have expended much manual labor in his letter-writing, however, for he wrote a hasty and almost illegible hand. The difficulties of deciphering his letters are sometimes insurmountable. When he wrote French he practically never used capitals and was very niggardly in his use of accents; in writing English he took a few more pains--he sometimes used capitals and was fairly generous with punctuation. Although he probably did not write English quite so rapidly as French, to judge by the penmanship, he used the same cramped and hurried scrawl only slightly less illegibly. In editing the letters a few changes have been made in capitalization for those written in English; no changes have been made wittingly in the French. The abbreviation "ALS" is used to denote an autograph letter, signed; "AL" indicates an autograph letter, unsigned.

1

To the Prince de Montbarey, French Minister of War, Ministère de la guerre, archives historiques, Carton $A^4$51, letter 85 (copy from Fanny Varnum Vigoureux, Los Angeles).

Brest, April 2, 1780

Monsieur

J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser la copie d'une lettre que j'ai écrite aux differens corps qui sont aux ordres de M^r le C^{te} de Rochambeau, et celle de l'instruction relative à la discipline des troupes, pendant l'embarquement le séjour sur les vaisseaux et le débarquement: J'aurai celui de vous

adresser incessamment l'etat de situation de toutes les troupes dont je fais le détail. Les Régimens, que Mr. le Cte. de Rochambeau embarque dans ce moment-ci, sont prêts de tout point et dans le meilleur etat possible.

Permettés, mon Prince, que je profite de cette occasion pour vous témoigner le regret que j'ai eû de partir sans prendre congé de vous, quoique j'aye été deux fois à Versailles pour m'acquitter de ce devoir; j'espere que vous n'aurés pas besoin que je vous assure de la reconnoissance que je conserve de vos bontés et du desir que j'ai de les mériter et de les justifier.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec respect monsieur Votre très humble et tres obéissant serviteur

lechrdechastellux[1]

2

ALS to George Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Washington's letters to Chastellux have been published many times, apparently on the assumption that Chastellux derived more importance from the letters he received from the great Washington than those written by himself. In 1825 fifteen letters of Washington to Chastellux were published in a small volume dedicated to General Lafayette, who was then touring the United States;[2] two years later nine of the same letters were included at the end of the American edition of Chastellux's Voyages,[3] and Jared Sparks included Washington's letters to Chastellux in his Writings of George Washington (New York, 1847). Despite the title "Lettres inédites du général Washington au marquis de Chastellux," the letters published by Comte Henri de Chastellux in Le correspondant, LXV (1865), 426-444, had all appeared in print at least once before.

The other side of the correspondence is here presented in the letters of Chastellux to Washington (see letters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21 below). Chastellux, like nearly all the French officers, had a great personal as well as professional admiration for Washington, and these letters offer

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[1] Chastellux's signature was invariably so written until he took the title Marquis de Chastellux in 1784.

[2] General Washington's Letters to the Marquis de Chastellux (Charleston, 1825).

[3] Travels in North-America, in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782 (New York, 1827).

substantial proof that Chastellux was thoroughly trained in the arts of the courtier. The first letter was written only a few days after Chastellux returned to Newport after his first tour of the interior.

Dear general

Being arrived at Newport, I find myself very happy; not because my health is rather improved than impaired by a long and fatiguing journey, nor because I have seen the vast and interesting theatre of the most memorable transactions, but because I had the opportunity to know the first personage who shines upon it, and to add the feelings of my heart to those with which he had inspired my soul long time before. Your excellency commands the respects and the admiration of both hemispheres, but to love you is the peculiar privilege, of those who enjoyed your society. I know, dear general, that your modesty do not allow your friends the pleasure that they should find in expressing their sentiments; but give me leave to observe that those are only apt to forget that you are great who know how you are good. I have experienced your indulgence, and when I wish to satisfy my vanity and to hope that I deserve it someway, I think that you distinguished in me a true friend to your country and to the great cause of liberty.

I am happy, dear general, in the opportunity that is offered to me to present my respects to your excellency. Count de Charlut[4] the son of Marquis de Castries,[5] our new minister, is a young gentleman endowed with the best and most amiable qualities, but I may do him justice in a word by saying that he is a worthy friend to Marquis de Lafayette. He resigned a colonelship at home to serve in America and left in France a very handsome lady whom he had married six months before. I hope that he will certify to your excellency the respect and the attachment of the whole French armie, but peculiarly that of your most obedient and humble servant

lechrdechastellux

Newport January 12, 1781
Captain Lynch and baron de Montesquieu[6] desire to be respectfully remembered to your excellency and to acknowledge all the goodness you have shown them.

3

ALS to Benjamin Franklin, American Philosophical Society,

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[4]Charlus.

[5]Became Minister of Marine in the French government at Versailles in 1780.

[6]Chastellux's aides-de-camp.

Franklin Papers, Vol. XXI, no. 42.

Monsieur

instruit a aimer et à estimer encore plus votre patrie depuis que je la vois de plus pres, ce sentiment est inseparable de celui que j'ai depuis longtems pour le digne representant qu'elle a en france. il m'est infiniment agreable, comme françois de rendre temoignage en amérique a la juste consideration ou plutôt a l'enthousiasme aussi bien senti que bien merité que vous avés inspiré a ma nation. ami des lettres et allie de l'amerique je dois respecter et aimer m^r franklin plus que personne. vous pouvés donc vous la rapporter a moi lorsque je vous assure que m^r Laurens[7] partage mes opinions et mes sentimens, et qu'apres le bien de sa patrie, ce qu'il desire le plus au monde, c'est votre estime et votre amitié. je suis sur que vous trouverés en lui la capacité pour les affaires joint au zele d'un citoyen et a la candeur d'un soldat. il peut parroitre ettonant que je vous recommande un de vos compatriotes, mais ayant préparé et operé la revolution de la moitié de l'amerique pourriés vous connoitre tous ceux qui vous avés affranchis?

C'est a Philadelphie que j'ai connu mr Laurens et c'est là que vos lettres m'ont valu le meilleur accueil de M^r Reed[8] et de la societé academique.[9] agreés en mes remercimens ainsi que l'assurance des sentimens sincere avec les quels j'ai l'honneur d'etre votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

lechrdechastellux

a newport le 1^re fevrier 1781

4

ALS to the Marquis de Castries, French Minister of Marine, Ministère de la guerre, 3732, Part III, no. 64. Library of Congress photostat.

a newport le 3 avril, 1781

vous avés eu la bonté, monsieur le marquis, de desirer que je vous entretienne quelque fois de la famille que vous avés dans ce pais cy. il y a six mois que m^r votre fils la composoit toute entiere. maintenant vous y avés un fils et une fille qui tous deux doivent vous donner une egale satisfaction. cette fille nouvelle et adoptive est la marine françoise. elle a aussi de l'amitié pour moi et je me trouve fort a mon aise en vous parlant de l'un et de l'autre. je ne vous dirai pas quel visage a m^r de charlut, car il y a plus

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[7] Colonel John Laurens, Washington's secretary, sent on a special mission to France by Congress.

[8] President Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania.

[9] The American Philosophical Society.

de trois mois que je ne l'ai vû. mais je sais par les dernieres nouvelles que nous avons eu de m^r de lafayette qu'il se portoit bien et qu'il se proposoit de rester avec son ami jusqu'a la decision de l'entreprise dont vous savés maintenant l'issue.[10] m^r votre fils en prenant sur lui de donner cette nouvelle marque de zele et d'emulation n'a negligé aucune des precautions necessaires pour faire approuver cette demarche a m^r de Rochambeau. il lui a ecrit une lettre parfaittement conçu et celui cy, comme vous la pensés, n'a point trouvés mauvais qu'il cherchoit a s'instruire et a se distinguer. j'ignore encore si m^r de lafayette ne pouvant etre aidé par nous a chasser Arnold[11] prendra le parti de rester en observation et de proteger le sud qui est la partie sufrante. en ce cas, m^r votre fils reviendroit icy dans le courant de ce mois cy. il y a toute apparence que nous en partirons au mois de juin pour nous porter sur la riviere du nord et faciliter ainsi au general Washington la partage de ses forces devenu necessaires. nous avons eu icy pendant huit jours cet excellent homme.[12] il a gagné les suffrages et l'affection de toute l'armée. je n'etois point une nouvelle connoissance pour lui, mais au resorte, je ne puis me dispenser de me vanter de l'amitié particuliere qu'il m'a temoigné.

il est tems, monsieur le marquis, que je revienne a votre fille. je vous dirai donc avec bien de plaisir que la marine françoise a peu livré de combats qui lui fassent plus d'honneur que celui du 16.[13] la disparité des forces etoit extrême, et tout l'avantage a eté pour elle. mais ce qu'il y a de particulier à ce combat, c'est que non seulement le commandant a très bien manoeuvré et a déconcerté Arbuthnot[14] par son habileté, mais que chaque capitaine de vaisseau a eu occasion de se distinguer. vous savés quel terrible combat le conquerant[15] a soutenu. m^r de la grandière, petit homme, simple mesquin qui sait à peine écrire s'est conduit avec un courage, une activité et une presence d'esprit admirable. m^r de la clochetire[16] a fait des merveilles, (couvrant le conquerant dans sa detresse)[17] et manoeuvrant toujours a propos, mais m. de marigny a fait tout ce qu'on peut demander a un marin. sa vergue de lune avoit cassé devant les ennemis; en leur presence

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[10] In March the French fleet at Newport had attempted, unsuccessfully, to penetrate Chesapeake Bay and assist in Lafayette's plan to capture Arnold. Lafayette, lacking naval assistance, had had to abandon his plans to trap Arnold's force in Virginia.

[11] Benedict Arnold.

[12] March 6-13, 1781.

[13] March, 1781. The passage beginning "la marine françoise a peu livré de combats" in this sentence, extending to the sentence ending "enchantés les uns des autres et unis comme des freres" on p. 147, was printed in A.-R.-M.-A. de Noailles, Marins et soldats français en Amérique pendant la guerre de l'indépendance des États-unis (1778-1783) (Paris, 1903), pp. 209-211.

[14] British admiral.

[15] French vessel.

[16] Clocheterie in Noailles.

[17] The passage in parentheses is given in Noailles as "passage illisible."

et presque a portée de leur canon, il en a reparé une autre en moins d'un quart d'heure de tems. on dit que son equipage, qu'il a formé et dont il est adoré, est seul capable d'une telle dextérité que les anglois même ne pouvoient l'égaler. sa conduitte dans le combat a repondu à sa manoeuvre. ces deux derniers officers sont des gens bien distingués. m^r de Médine, voyant le Robuste[18] désemparé [word illegible][19], s'est allé placer a demi portée de fusil, par l'arriere de ce batiment et lui a tiré deux bordées a brule pourpoint, qui ont achevé de l'abismer. l'eveillé[20] a combattu le London[21] et lui a tiré 300 coups de canon aux quels il n'en a pas répondu 50. enfin, monsieur le marquis, (que vous dirai-je)?[22] Officiers, equipages tout ont[23] fait des merveilles, tout mérite distinction et récompense. une chose charmante, c'est que les troupes de terre ont fait des prodiges de leur coté et que les marins et le detachement sont revenus enchantés les uns des autres et unis comme des frères. je ne dois pas vous laisser ignorer les services particuliers de deux officiers mes amis intimes dont je vous ai deja parlé. vous pensés bien que des pareilles manoeuvres quoique commandés par le general ne peuvent manquer de faire beaucoup d'honneur au major de l'escadre. pour m^r de capellis qui a eté chargé de l'armement de la flotte, vous sentirés quelle obligation on doit lui avoir lorsque vous reflecterés que la flotte etoit venu icy avec six mois d'aprovisionemens seulement, qu' elle manquoit d'agrès et d'argent et que lorsqu'il a fallu la faire sortir elle s'est formée prête en 8 jours ayant tout son complement de voils, cordages &c et meme tous les rechanges necessaires.

peut etre, monsieur le marquis, trouverés vous que je me mesle de choses qui ne me regardent pas, mais j'ai pour excuse mon attachement pour vous et mon zele pour le bien public, deux choses qui n'en sont qu'une a mes yeux. si je suis importun, je me remettrai bientôt et aisement a ma place. en attendant, je vous parlerai encore avec franchise sur un objet que je trouve important. la marine francoise a besoin de regle et de discipline, mais en même tems elle peut etre conduitte avec une sorte de coquetterie dans les choses individuelles qui fait tout passer dans les choses generales. je ne vous disimuler pas qu'il me paroit que vous avés traitté m^r de la touche avec rigueur et que vous lui avés ecrit un peu sechement. il en a eté consterné pendant plusieurs jours. or il est bon que vous scachies que m^r de la touche, sujet distingué par son zele, sa valeur, ses talens et la noblesse de son caractere est icy vraiment [two words illegible] de l'amerique et des deux armées de terre et de mer dont il est adoré. Les americains ont la plus haute opinion de lui et il n'y a rien qu'ils ne voulussent faire pour la lui temoigner. il a les actions pour donner lui de noblesse et de generosité dont il n'y a peu d'exemples. m^r de lafayette a pu vous mander comment en le conduisant a Boston, il ne voulut pas

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[18]British vessel.

[19]Omitted in Noailles.

[20]French vessel.

[21]British vessel.

[22]The passage in parentheses is given incorrectly in Noailles as "qui vous designer."

[23]Noailles gives "a."

prendre un vaisseau de la jamaique parceque cela l'auroit retardé [illegible] heures. il defendit qu'on eveillat m^r de lafayette, de peur que par delicatesse il ne le forcat de prendre le vaisseau et de l'amariner [two words illegible] une affaire de cent mille écus pour lui et son equipage. on dit qu'il a manoeuvré parfaittement le 16 pour conserver le fantasque que trois fregates ennemies [word illegible] d'après.

Je vous repeterai encore une chose, c'est que je crois l'administration des escadres bonne et economique et que pour tout ce que je connois de la marine je pense que l'époque du retablissement de la [word illegible] seroit celle de sa s^de [word illegible]. vous avés du recevoir, monsieur le marquis un memoir que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous adresser sur un autre objet. Je crois qu'il y manque bien des choses, mais que le fond en est bon. la même chose vous aura eté dites par cent bouches differentes.

il est tems de terminer cette longue lettre mais en vous recommandant encore mon aide de camp ou plutôt mon ami Lynch. j'ai demandé le brevet de colonel pour lui. tous les jours je m'y attache davantage. [word illegible] d'une maladie ou il m'a soigné avec une amitié et un bon naturel dont je suis vraiment touché.

agreés, monsieur le marquis, les assurances de sincere et respectueux attachement que je vous ai voué pour la vie

lechrdechastellux

me permettes que je vous adresse un paquet de lettres pour mon neveu[24] et quelques autres personnes.

m^r de la grandieres a desiré que je vous ferai parvenir un duplicata de sa lettre. il n'a pas besoin de recommandations dans un moment ou il vient de se couvrir de gloire. il[25] me semble qu'il seroit a la fois politique et juste de faire m^r destouches chef d'escadre a[26] prendre son rang dans la p^re promotion. c'est donner de la solemnité [?] a son combat: peu de capitaines de vaisseau se sont trouvés d'ailleurs dans le cas de commander une escadre et cela ne fera pas crier. souvenes vous que je vous ai mandé qu'il soutiendroit bien l'honneur du pavillon francois.

la Perouse est revenu icy enchanté de vous. c'est un sujet bien distingué qui repondra toujours a vos bontés.

ose-je vous prier de me rappeler au souvenir de m^de guines et de m^dē de Charlut. j'écris a mes amis.

me permettés vous d'ofrir mes respects a m^de la m^ise [illegible]. je [illegible] de lui ecrire, mais je suis convalescent et accabli d'ecriture dans ce moment cy.

5

ALS to Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, Commissary-General in

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[24]The Comte de Chastellux.

[25]From here to the end of the paragraph appears in Noailles, loc. cit.

[26]Noailles gives "et."

Connecticut for Washington's army, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Simon Gratz Collection.

Newport, April 29, 1781

Dear colonel

I enclose here a letter for major Talmagge[27] that must be delivered in his own hands. I know that he is your friend, and I will only tell you that you may comply with every application which he will make for the service of our armie.

This letter shall be presented to you by colonel Menonville an adjutant-general, and my peculiar friend. He goes first to head quarter, and after to Philadelphia. I request your kindness for him, and I hope that he shall testify to you the sentiments of esteem and attachment with which I have the honour to be dear colonel your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

I was very sorry that my sickness did deprive me of the pleasure to see you at Newport. I am now perfectly ricovered--I was told this evening that a horse was arriving for me. I expect him to morrow. My respects to Mistriss Wadsworth and to your sisters.

5

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

[April 29, 1781][28]

Dear general

I was confined in my bed and very sick when I received the favour of your letter. That letter came on purpose, and served as an encouragement to get the better of my desease. I did not judge proper to depart with a life so much honoured and endeared to me by your friendship. The respect and attachment that I profess for your excellency are such that they may indeed claim a distinction but, dear general, while you continued at Newport they were lost in the universal applause and admiration of our armies. Your excellency carried the hearts of the French; let the bodies follow, and may we be happy enough to fight at your sight [sic] and under your command.

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[27]Major Benjamin Talmadge, American officer.

[28]Washington's endorsement reads "April, 1781." In his letter to Chastellux of May 7, 1781 (cf. John C. Fitzpatrick [ed.], The Writings of George Washington [Washington, 1931-], XXII, 54-55), he acknowledges Chastellux's "favour of the 29th ultimo," delivered by Colonel Ménonville. Since Chastellux wrote a letter to Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth on April 29 which was also carried by Colonel Ménonville, the letter to Washington here given was probably of April 29, 1781.

I am sorry that the convoy of our navy is to prove so useless to the common cause. Opinion is always something, and constancy will perform one day or another what the boldest attempts will not do.

I beg leave to present your excellency with that due homage and true respect with which I suscribe my self your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

If Colonel Hamilton has left his captivity[29] I desire to be recalled to his memory. Colonel Tilghman,[30] as being both an agreeable gentleman and a batchelor, is peculiarly regretted by the young ladies of Newport.

7

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Newport, May 12, 1781

Dear general

Your excellency is persuaded I hope, that I cannot forget any word that was dropt from your mouth: I know very well how you labor under the scarcity of provisions, and it was on that account that I was the first to propose that colonel Menonville might be directed to your excellency, previous to any aplication to congress. I was sensible that every aplication of that kind should rather cross your measures than promote ours. This shall be avoided by the message of the colonel, who shall act only by your directions. He is full of gratitude for your good and kind reception, and of admiration for your person.

As my zeal for your country and my attachment for your excellency knows no limits, I hazard, dear general, a step that may be considered as a transgression, acting but an under part in the French armie, but I rely on the secrecy of your excellency, as one of his numerous virtues. I determine accordingly to acquaint you with the news that I have got by private letter, which deserves as much confidence as the very dispatches of the count.[31]

The convoy that we expect will carry but a very indifferent reinforcement, and rather recruits than reinforcements. But the deficiency in the troops is made up by considerable assistance in money to be aplied only to the support of your armies. A large fleet of 26 ships of the line sailed from Brest, March 22, bound for West Indies, under M. de Grasse. 4 ships will separate from the fleet and make their way to East Indies under commander de Suffren. 6 ships of the line were ready to sail with M. de la Motte Piquet, their destination unknown. Upon the large fleet seven or eight thousand land forces are embarked, but the greater part

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[29] Alexander Hamilton; he had recently been married.

[30] One of Washington's aides. [31] Rochambeau.

recruits and only one batallion of [word illegible] of thousand men, and the new levied regiment of Pondicherry of 1500.

A conference with your excellency is on foot. I will follow the count at Hartford, and I wish that this conference be more conducible to the publick welfare than the last. I should be glad to have some private communication with your excellency; but we must avoid giving suspicion of a peculiar [word illegible]. I foresee that your excellency shall find a great inclination to march on North River, and a great dislike for advancing any farther and particularly beyond the bay.[32] I speak of men that you know. The admiral[33] is a good plain dealing gentleman who shall give no dificulty.

I entreat your excellency to burn this letter that I write in a hurry, and to excuse my bad style. I have the honour to be dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

Don't you think that Newport should be preserved by a small body of French troops assisted by the militia? I think that the last without the former should not do. This is a point that is to be discussed at Hartford.

8

AL to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers. Endorsement in Washington's hand.

White Tavern,[34] May 21, 1781

The dificulties arising from the present circumstances and from several other causes having employed my thoughts upon the road, I imagined and proposed that plan that I submitt to your excellency. The French army with its field artillery should march to the Jerseys and choose a position between North River and the Delaware, there to remain till a fleet under M[r] de Grasse, officially announced, is arrived at Newport or at Boston. As soon as that fleet is arrived, our heavy artillery and all our stores left behind at Newport or at Providence are embarked upon the ships, and the whole fleet sails directly for Chesapeake, whilst we march by land to Trenton, embark on boats upon the Delaware, sail down to Chester or to Newcastle and thence proceed to the bay. Our fleet being superior and having taken possession of the bay, send up the frigates with some transports, and all the small craft of the bay to transport our army to York[35] or any other place near the camp of Arnold and Phillips.[36] If the Brittish

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[32] New York Bay?

[33] The Comte de Barras.

[34] At Andover, Connecticut; Chastellux and Rochambeau were on the road from Newport to Wethersfield, Connecticut, for a conference with Washington.

[35] Yorktown, Virginia.

[36] William Phillips, commanding British officer in Virginia. Arnold had commanded there before Phillips reinforced him in March.

have not evacuated Virginia September and October shall afford a sufficient time and a proper season to conquer them, nay to march further in the sudern [sic] and to besiege Charlestown.[37]

This plan proposed by me in a cursory way and as at random, was approved and adhered to. So that it may happen that it will be proposed to your excellency and I dare say it will. Therefore I think it is better that you expect like the matter be laid before your excellency. But if some time happen to pass in the conversation, without any mention of it, then your excellency may propose it as sudden and newborn thought.

Now it is my duty to expose the reasons which made me think at the aforementioned plan as one of the best that the circumstances can admitt.

The West Indies fleet cannot possibly arrive before the end of July. If we remain at Rhode Island till it comes we make no diversion at all and give the Brittish all liberty to reinforce Arnold, whilst we throw a kind of dishonour, nay a ridicule upon our armie and discredit our alliance in the eyes of America.

Besides, if we must embark at once our troops, baggage and field artillery, it shall be a matter full of dificulties and delay. But being near the Delaware we keep the English in awe both at New York and in the bay, and as soon as the fleet is arrived, we proceed to the suderne with the greatest facility--the count calls for me just now. I must put an end to my reflexions and to this very [word illegible] and indigested memorandum. I hope that your excellency will be so good to keep it secret. Even to Mr Duportail.

Pray, keep for your self that the fleet is officially announced.

9

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Newport, June 9, 1781

Dear general

I am very sorry to see that the resolve of our board of war[39] did not appear to your eyes under a favorable light; but I cannot forbear complaining to your excellency with all the feelings of attachment and duty, that you could entertain the least suspicion upon the meaning of a step to which I gave my vote. The mention made of unanimity could have recalled to your memory, that there was a man in that board who was incapable of consenting to any measure which could cross your orders, nay your very wishes. I regret that the hurry in which duke de Lauzun set out prevented me to write

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[37]Charleston, South Carolina.

[38]Brigadier General Duportail, commander of engineers in Washington's army.

[39]Held at Newport May 31, 1781; it was decided to retain Newport as the base of the French fleet.

to your excellency. But as he is my friend and well intentioned, I thought he might express my opinion better than a letter. I did not participate to those that he bore to your excellency. It may be that they failed in the explanation of our motives; but it is indeed very unhappy, if a measure proposed by the bravest and ablest officers of our navy, and supported by the true friends, both of your excellency and of America, bore the appearance of a deviation from the disposition made by your excellency. We thought that the removal of the fleet was an evil attending a good and necessary operation, and we were persuaded to please your excellency by endeavouring to prevent that evil, and going beyond your expectation in preserving the fleet in the situation where, according to the opinion of its officers, it is more capable of conspiring to the execution of your plan. I wish sincerely that in the coalition of allyed forces no other mistakes might take place; for I pledge my faith and my honour that it was dictated by an impulsion of mere zeal. This zeal did not subside at all in the new board of war; when it was intimated to them that your excellency saw some danger in the present station of the fleet, it was unanimously answered that danger was the lot of war, and ought to be counterballanced by the advantages of which it is productive. They thought that after your excellency had made his wish known about the destination of the land forces under your command, you was no more answerable for their fate. Indeed this disposition occasioned an application for 500 militia more; but your excellency may observe that upon that point, there was no unanimity. I need not to say more on that article, but I shall conclude this letter by entreating your excellency to place some confidence in my zeal and candor and to be persuaded that I should rather exceed, if it were possible, than be backward in testifying my attachment to America and her great protector.

I am with the most sincere respect dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

I think that the news lately arrived from West Indies will make your excellency perfectly easy about the station of our fleet.

We [word illegible] just now that the money is arrived safe at Marblehead.[40] The Alliance[41] took a frigate of 22 guns and made several valuable prizes esteemed one million of livres. The Marquis de Lafayette is wanting having quitted the Alliance in a very hard squall.

10

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

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[40] In Massachusetts; a shipment of money from France was nearly captured when the British intercepted part of a small squadron of French ships.

[41] American frigate.

Hartford,[42] June 23, 1781

Dear general

This is only to acknowledge the favour of your very kind answer to my last letter. I know that your excellency will always give a good construction to everything that is inspired by my zeal both for your person and your country. I make no doubt but matters were not properly offered to your sight; but I could judge only of the thing in it self, and had nothing to do with the forms which I apprehend were none of the best. I shall communicate to the gentlemen that I mentioned to your excellency your satisfaction of their good intentions. When I enjoy the happiness to see your excellency I shall acquaint you with their names and caracters.

Our armie is advancing as fast as possible in good health and in good spirits, all chearfull to serve under your command.

Your excellency will see by the letter of count de Rochambeau that admiral Barras will muster his best exertions to serve the common cause. I know the spirit that prevails in the navy and I can assure your excellency that they shall be never backward in the service.

I have the honour to be with the warmest zeal and most sincere respect dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

11

[Phillipsburg?][43]

Dear general

I send to your excellency a man who was arrested yesterday night in a house near the hospital where our surgeon and chaplain quarter. He was in company with three rascals who had got drunk and made great noise in the house where they had intruded, breaking and disloging the furniture and abusing your excellency and your armie in their discourses. This is assertained to me by the chaplain who is an Irish man and understands English very well. The same chaplain says that the man now arrested was more prudent than the others. But I think that he ought to be examined. The French soldiers who conduct him to your excellency got two cutlasses belonging to those people. Your excellency will be so good to dispose of the man and of the arms. I am dear general, with all respect and duty your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

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[42]Rochambeau's army was en route to join Washington's army on the Hudson River.

[43]The camp of the combined armies was near Phillipsburg, New York, July 6 to August 15, 1781.

July 13, 1781

The bearer of this letter is the chaplain who shall give any evidence that your excellency may want to judge of the above matters.

12

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

[Phillipsburg?]

Dear general

Your excellency knows very well that it is an old precept to offer the tythes of all earthly goods to the ministers of God. I think in my opinion that the true ministers of God are those who at the risk of their life employ their virtues and abilities to promote the happiness of mankind which consists for the greatest part in freedom and liberty. Accordingly I believe I am bound in duty to present your excellency with one of ten barrils of Claret that I have just received. If you was, dear general, unkind enough not to accept of it, I should be apt to think that you want to prevent the blessings of heaven to fall upon me, or, as I was saying yesterday that you are an enemy to French produce and have a little of the tory in your composition.

Whatsoever be the high opinion that I entertain of your excellency I wish to judge by that criterion and to guess by it your dispositions for the French troops and for myself. I have the honour to be with all respect and attachment dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

Camp July 18, 1781

13

To the Comte de Vergennes, Ministère des affaires étrangères, correspondance politique, États-unis, Vol. XIX, no. 58, as copied in New York Public Library, Bancroft Transcripts (the text has been somewhat modernized).

Camp at York, October 25, 1781

Vous me faisiez l'honneur de me mander l'hiver dernier, Monsieur le comte, que pour bien écrire vous aveiz besoin qu'on vous taillât des plumes. Je crois que mr de Lauzun et mr de deux ponts[44] vous en portent qui sont à votre main. Recevez-en je vous en supplie mon sincère compliment et croyez qu'après m'être réjoui comme bon patriote j'ai vu avec le plus grand plaisir que les opérations de la guerre concouraient enfin avec les sages mesures du cabinet. Il aurait été à

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[44]Comte Guillaume de Deux-Ponts, French officer.

desirer que nous eussions pu attaquer sur le champ Charlestown, mais m^r de Grasse avait pris des engagements et d'ailleurs je ne sais si les mers de la Caroline sont tenables en cette saison, au reste, de même que M^r Pitt[45] se vantait d'avoir pris le Canada en Allemagne nous pourrons conquérir Charleston aux iles de vent et New York à la Jamaique. Je ne sais si nos succès sont déja tels qu'ils peuvent inspirer de la jalousie en Europe. Si cela était le moment serait venue de faire la paix, mais on croit en Europe et en Amérique que le ministère français n'a pas l'esprit et le nom de M^r de Vergennes sera toujours lié à l'idée de justice et de moderation. Il est bien sur, Monsieur le comte, que l'Amérique a pris une face nouvelle: vous lui avez donné des moyens et vous l'avez mise en état de faire usage de ses propres forces. J'ai toujours pensé et je crois avoir eu l'honneur de vous écrire que ce n'etait pas avec une armée nombreuse mais avec des combinaisons inattendues qu'on pourrait avoir des succès dans ce pays-ci. L'expérience a justifié mon opinion. Les subsides ont mieux fait qu'une grande division et la position des troupes des iles plus que 3000 hommes qui seraient parti de New-York et contre lesquels on aurait eu le tems de se précautionner. Cependant je crois que notre petit corps de troupes a besoin d'être alimenté et surtout renforcé.

Vous voyez, Monsieur, que je n'ai pas le défaut ordinaire à tous les militaires c'est de ne voir que le lieu où ils sont et de vouloir tout attirer à eux. J'espère n'avoir pas aussi celui de me prévaloir des services que je puis avoir rendus. Si vous questionnez ceux qui reviennent de ce pays-ci ils vous diront peut-être que je n'y ai pas été inutile mais il est des genres de services dont il faut que l'amour propre fasse le sacrifice. Seulement il me serait trop difficile de faire celui des titres que je pourrais acquérir a votre estime et a votre bienveillance et de tout ce qui pourrait vous prouver le sincere et respectueux attachment avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur le Comte, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur

lecḥrdechastellux

14

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Williamsburg,[46] January 22; 1782

Dear general

I have received with the greatest sensibility the new token of your indulgence and partiality for me. Nothing else would reconcile me with a dull winter spent at such a distance of your excellency. I had taken such a pleasing habit of

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[45]William Pitt the elder, British foreign minister during the Seven Years' War.

[46]In Virginia; the French army was quartered there in 1782, until July.

serving under your command, and of enjoying your presence, that I am apt to believe that I live no more in America, but exiled in some remote corner of the world. I long, dear general, for the day when I can ask you the parole, and I wish it may be upon Long Island or York Island.[47] There is no doubt, but new exertions are to be made, and I have every ground to hope that France shall not be found deficient neither in supplying money nor in affording an immediate and constant assistance of land and naval forces. Our contest is with a stubborn enemy. You have maimed him several times; but if he continues fighting, we must strike at his head.

Gal Rochambeau will communicate to your excellency a letter from Gal Greene[48] and ask your orders in consequence of it. I hope that you will approve the previous measures that he is determined to take. But I should be very sorry if any groundless fears, should put the French army out of the good way, the road that leads to the center of the war, or as I was just saying, to the head of our adversary.

The share that your excellency is so good to take in our success at Eustatia[49] makes me twice happy upon that event. Perhaps the old prejudiced people of America will begin to doubt whether the British are inconquerable or not. Your excellency did everything to open their eyes, and we only follow your example in other parts of the world. May fortune be once true to merit and continue faithfull to your excellency. These are the views of your most humble servant

lechrdechastellux

Permit me dear general, to present my respects to Mrs. Washington.

15

ALS to General Philip Schuyler, photostat in the New York Public Library, Miscellaneous Papers. The original of this letter is owned by Mr. Grenville Kane, of Tuxedo Park, New York.

Williamsburg, February 18, 1782

Vos remercimens, mon cher general, ont bien une autre valeur que celle que vous leur donnés; ils font la satisfaction de mon coeur, qui, je l'espere, a quelque droits sur le votre; ils sont la recompense de mes foibles travaux qui n'en ont pas autant sur votre esprit, mais que votre sensibilité seule a jugés. un musicien qui joue un air tendre devant une jeunne personne, deja préocupée par une passion vive, n'a pas besoin d'etre un grand artiste pour l'émouvoir et faire couler ses larmes. j'ai plaidé la cause de l'humanité que vous avés

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[47] Manhattan Island.

[48] American commander in the southern department.

[49] St. Eustatius; one of the Leeward Islands in the West Indies, recently captured by the French.

servie; son nom, seulement prononcé, retentit au fond de votre coeur. vous avés etabli ses loix dans les deserts du nord, que vous avés peuplés et défendus; vous avés consacré votre vie à la servir et à l'honorer, et les éloges que vous avés prodigués à l'auteur qui écrivoit en sa faveur, lorsque vous agissiés pour elle, sont un hommage qu'il a surpris a votre modestie, et qu'il vous a forcé de vous rendre à vous même. que votre situation est differente de la mienne! tous les avantages que vous avés, vous pouvés les employer pour le bien de vos semblables. une grande réputation, un grand caractere, de grands talens et une grande influence, tout vous met a portée d'etre le legislateur du même peuple dont vous avés eté le défenseur. pour moi, je ne puis réclamer que cette attention d'un moment qu'on donne a un livre, que cette impression legere qui commence rarement avec la premiere page, et qui finit toujours avec la derniere. d'ailleurs moraliste de l'ancien monde, je ressemble à un medecin qui traittant un corps malade et use n'ofra d'autre remede qu'un bon regime, qu'il n'est peut etre plus tems de suivre. vous, vous avés à conduire un jeunne homme plain de vigueur et de santé, et dont ce que vous avés à lui préscrire c'est un usage raisonable et moderé des forces que la nature lui a données.

Le moment approche ou l'on verra à quel point les americains ont merité la liberté. c'est par l'usage qu'ils feront de leurs succès qu'ils en consacreront la mémoire. permettés moi de vous dire, mon cher general, que d'après le jugement que j'ai pû former de vos compatriotes, je pense qu'ils ont encore besoin d'etre éclairés par le petit nombre d'hommes de genie qu'ils ont parmi eux; car en tout tems et en tous lieux les hommes de genie sont en petit nombre. après avoir secoué le joug de l'autorité dans l'ordre civil, prenés garde à l'empire qu'elle exerca sur l'opinion; défiés vous surtout de celui que les livres se sont arrogés. Les livres ont cet avantage d'exciter à penser les gens d'un entendement médiocre; ils ont aussi cet inconvénient d'en dispenser ceux qui nés avec plus d'esprit et de penetration auroient fait un heureux usage de leurs propres lumieres. il m'a paru que l'amerique abondoit en demi philosophes de deux classes differentes: les vieux ne voyent en matiere politique que les grecs et les romains, et les jeunnes se contentent des opinions qu'ils ont trouvées toutes faittes dans Locke et Montesquieu. or je crois que la lecture des anciens et des modernes n'est pas plus capable de suggerer le plan d'un bon gouvernement que celle de l'art poetique d'horace de donner naissance a un bon poëme. je l'ai dit, je l'ai repeté dans mon ouvrage: des idées abstraittes ne feront jamais la base d'une constitution raisonable. l'experience même est encore trop courte et trop fautive. il faut consulter les tems et les lieux, les usages les habitudes, oui les habitudes, car un peuple à toujours eté quelque chose avant d'avoir une forme de gouvernement etablie. Mr de voltaire a beaucoup aimé et beaucoup cité une phrase de ce livre pour lequel vous avés tant d'indulgence. ce n'est qu'a des peuples brutes qu'on peut donner telles loix qu'on veut. consultons moins les droits des hommes que les interets des hommes; et si l'on veut qu'ils soient tous egaux dans l'ordre civil rendons les égaux aux yeux de la raison; car c'est au sages de gouverner et au stupides d'obéir. les tristes experiences qu'on a faittes presque toujours du

gouvernement democratique sont venues de cette erreur qu'il a eté établi prematurement, et qu'on a crû que tous les etres qui marchoient sur deux pieds etoient semblables entre eux. La proprieté, lorsqu'on y regarda de plus près, paroit une mesure plus naturelle de pouvoir; non seulement parceque l'etat n'est qu'un assemblage de proprietés, mais encore parcequ'elle est le gage de l'education et des principes de ceux dont elle est le partageur. mais je m'engage dans une suitte de reflexions dont vous avés moins besoin que personne; car ce que je voulois dire, c'est que lorsque l'amerique a des franklins, des Adams et des schuyler, elle servit mieux de les consulter que les livres qu'elle conserve dans ses bibliotequeS.

mon amour pour la philosophie ne doit pas me faire oublier que je suis militaire; surtout, mon cher general, lorsque j'ai a vous remercier de tout ce que vous me dittes d'honnête et de touchant sur la part que la france a eue aux triomphes de l'amerique. j'ai écrit contre la guerre, mais je l'ai aimée lorsqu'elle humilioit les satallites du despotisme et les incendiaires de vos belles provinces. cette fin de campagne a eté bien douce pour moi, mais vous n'avés pas voulu en rendre le commencement aussi agréable que je l'esperois. je m'etois flatté de passer quelque tems avec vous, et je n'ai point oublié que vous n'avés pas même voulu accorder un quart d'heure au desir extrême que j'avois de vous voir. il y a livres ou on lit que dieu envoya son fils dans notre monde pour réparer les torts de tous les hommes. vous nous avés envoyé votre fille pour réparer les votres, et si les théologiens vraiment orthodoxes ne voulent pas lui accorder la Divinité, personne du moins ne disconviendra que ce ne soit un ange. vous m'avés confié, mon cher general, tous les droits de la paternité et j'en use comme vous, car j'aime beaucoup Miss schuyler, et je ne la gronde jamais, pas même lorsqu'elle danse un peu plus qu'il ne faudroit pour sa santé, ce qui compose le seul tort qu'on ait a lui reprocher. je ne veux pas vous dire a quel point on la trouve aimable, de peur de trop prolonger cette lettre deja si longue. cependant j'ai une maniere abregée de faire son éloge dont il faut bien que vous vous accommodiés, c'est de dire qu'elle merite d'etre la fille du general schuyler et la soeur de madame carter.[50] je ne puis vous exprimer le plaisir que j'ai eu a revoir cette derniere dont l'esprit, les graces et les vertus avoient deja acquis tant de droits a mes hommages, et que j'ai maintenant la satisfaction de regarder comme une ancienne amie, puisque c'est la premiere americaine que j'aye connue. il y a longtems, mon cher general, que vous pouvés vous féliciter comme l'auteur de la nature, et dire ce que j'ai fait est bien, mais vous ne vous reposes pas au septiéme enfant comme il s'est reposé au septiéme jour. votre famille s'est encore augmentée depuis mon passage a Albany, puisse le bonheur et les benedictions que vous merités se multiplier avec elle! et puisse parmis les sentimens dont votre coeur est si bien rempli, se mesler un peu d'amitié pour un étranger qui se flatte de ne l'etre pas absolument a votre ame et à vos principes.

voulés vous bien, mon cher general, ofrir mes hommages

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[50] One of Schuyler's daughters, whom Chastellux had met at Newport.

respectueux a Madame schuyler et a Madame hamilton?[51] vous ne m'avés pas parlé du colonel hamilton. je compte sur son amitié, comme il doit a jamais compter sur la mienne

lechrdechastellux

16

ALS to Washington, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Dreer Collection, Revolutionary Soldiers.

Philadelphia, August 5, 1782

Dear general

Since I am in America I never was so long time without seeing your excellency; and however the more I have enjoyed the happiness of your society, the less am I able to support your absence. In every circumstance I wish to be with you, but in time of war methinks that glory and success are not to be found elseware. It is with the highest satisfaction that I see our troops in motion to join your armie. I left them at Baltimore to pay a visit to our friend the chr de la Luzerne.[52] Nothing had been wanting to my happiness, had I met your excellency in this place where I followed you last summer, very near this time, and under the most favorable omens.[53] May this year either add to your success or crown them with a glorious peace!

I have the honour to be with the most sincere respect and attachment dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

17

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Philadelphia, December 21, 1782

Dear general

Was my mind only actuated by pride or self love on the moment when I must leave this continent, I could enjoy a perfect satisfaction; your kind and polite letter is indeed a glorious title above my expectations, and still more above my deserts: but my dear general, I love too much the man that I admire; and while I am proud to enjoy his esteem and benevolence, I regret his presence and conversation. Your friendship is an honor that makes me happy; but it is in the

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[51] Mrs. Alexander Hamilton was Schuyler's daughter.

[52] French ambassador to the United States.

[53] On the way to Yorktown for the siege of Cornwallis.

mean time a source of pleasure that is lost forever. For ever! God forbid it! No, my dear general, let me cherish the hope of seeing your excellency upon a continent that you conquered by your virtues and your fame, while you was defending this by your arms. Let me hope to see you [word illegible] the applause of a numerous and sensible people, turn your eyes towards me as towards a man that you love; and let every honest and delicate soul envy to me your smiles. That happy time is always before my eyes; sure, general, either peace or war will make me enjoy once more your presence; I wish it be peace. The letters we have just received cannot fix our ideas; among those letters, there is one of the marquis[54] directed to me; and as nobody else received any news from him, I conclude that General Duportail, who is not yet arrived,[55] is entrusted with some for your excellency; I'll nevertheless transcribe here a few lines of the marquis's letter. "We have here" says he "two Englishmen, and the work of a peace is not interrupted; but the conclusion is not perhaps so near as it is to be wished. I continue at Paris and I do not know when I'll be allowed to leave this country; my departure does not depend upon me;....I blush to give such an extent to my furlough....should peace take place, I'm determined to come over to America." The other articles of his letter concern family connections; his lady gave him a very small daughter, born at seven months: the mother and child were both well. When the letters are all arrived, and the despatches from the court deciphered, your excellency shall know better of the circumstances in Europe. I believe that count de Rochambeau will tarry here some days, and before my departure I'll have the honour to recall me to your memory, and tell me once more with the deepest sense of gratitude and respect, dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

I beg leave to present my best respects to Mrs. Washington. The letter directed to the marquis will be safely delivered at my arrival in France.

18

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Annapolis, January 8, 1783

Dear general

At the very instant that I embark and leave the American shore, my thoughts, my affections turn backwards and fly towards your excellency. You was my dearest expectation when I landed in this country, you are my last idea, my everlasting regrett when I am going off. Accept dear general, my best wishes for your excellency and excuse these few and imperfect lines that I write in a hurry. I arrived here yesterday very late and Count de Rochambeau already is waiting

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[54]The Marquis de Lafayette. [55]From France.

for me upon the frigate.[56] I have scarce time enough to express once more the true respect and tender attachment with which I have the honour to be dear general your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

19

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

Paris, March 4, 1783

Dear general

Nothing but the happy event[57] upon which I give you joy would lessen my grief, while I think how far I am from your excellency; when I reflect that this sheet of paper must cross the Atlantick before it comes to your hands. Is it the fate of men that no happiness is perfect and absolute? Must the blessings of peace, be separated from those of friendship? I have seen your head crowned with jewels and this suited very well the majesty of your countenance, but I wished to see your forehead orned with the olive, which suits as well the mildness of your features, and still more that of your heart. Remember, my dear general that you did not altogether discourage my hope to see your excellency in my country. I am asked here every day. Shall we see your great Washington? What can I answer? I have no courage to disappoint their fond expectation. Indeed, my dear general, if you are pleased with the alliance, if you wish to preserve a good harmony between France and America, you must yeld to our entreaties. Some bad consequence would follow your refusal: and, be it said in confidence, I am afraid, less some French man of war might go up the Potowmack,[58] land a party of soldiers, and carry you away. I know moreover that the marquis [?][59] will make use of all his interest to obtain the command of the expedition. This pirate is [word illegible]. Even Mrs. Washington is exposed by the depredatory scheme; and the French in spite of their respect to the ladies will approve the measure and [word illegible] the prize. Pray my dear general pay some attention to this hint and do not lose time to prevent the enterprise. The only way to escape is to send me a positive assurance that you are coming. Oh! my dear general could I hope to see the day. When you land upon the French coast, my impatience should be a kind of fever, and I would give to time those rapid wings which fame employed for seven years past to spread your name all over the world: this very idea stays my pen, and methinks that it is only in your bosom that I can express the feelings of respect gratitude and admiration

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[56]The "Emeraude," which took Rochambeau, Chastellux and others back to France.

[57]Signing of peace with Great Britain.

[58]Potomac River. [59]Lafayette?

with which I have the honour to be your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

Will you be so good to present my respects to Mrs. Washington and to recall me to the remembrance of the gentlemen of your armie and your family. Peculiarly to the colonels Tilghman, Cobb, Humphreys and Trumbull and to major Walker.

A great change takes place in the Brittish cabinet.[60] I have received the tidings with the greatest indiference. For it matters not when the patient is dead, what doctors anatomise the corpse and inquire into the cause of his death.

20

ALS to Benjamin Franklin, American Philosophical Society, Franklin Papers, Vol. XXVIII, no. 135.

Monsieur coste qui vous remettra cette lettre est mon cher docteur un tres habile medecin et un excellent homme. il etoit premier medecin de notre petite armée americaine. il a souvent été dans le cas de traitter vos soldats et il l'a fait avec zele et avec succès. il aime vos compatriotes et en est aimé. L'ouvrage qu'il vous presente prouve l'estime qu'ils ont eue pour lui. je vous pris donc de le bien recevoir au nom de notre chere amerique, dont mon coeur sera toujours citoyen.

lechrdechastellux

1er juin 1783

21

ALS to Washington, Library of Congress, Washington Papers.

l'orient,[61] August 23, 1783

Dear general

The King[62] having honoured me since my return to Europe with a commission of inspector of his troops, and the Regiments I am to inspect being scattered through all the frontiers of this kingdom, I am engaged in a progress of four thousand miles; but I find myself presently as near America as possible; and I wish heartily that instead of travelling on by land, I might embark at this place and proceed to Virginia, where I am told, your excellency is retired like another Cincinnatus. Lord Shelburne[63] told the house with a

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[60] Resignation of Shelburne as premier.

[61] French port, in Brittany. [62] Louis XVI, of France.

[63] Former British prime minister.

patriotical emphasis that the moment of your independency should be the sunset of the Brittish glory and splendor. But there is no sunset for great Washington's fame; and your making a pause to fighting and commanding is a solstitium not s sundown. May the American star bely all the astronomical rules, and proceed from west to East! Every French man, as well in the country towns as in the capitale, asks me: shall we see your great Washington? I never fail to answer: I hope so; but t'is always with a sigh which betrays my doubts. You was so good, dear general, to testify in your last letter a resignation to your fate, whenever a French pirate undertakes to carry you off. The favorable opportunity is come. There was no taking you prisoner at the head of your army; but Mount Vernon is not a fortress, and if henceforth you walk armed it will be only as the philosopher of Horatius--integer vitae, scelerisque purus. But it will not do with a privateer. T'is then a thousand times better to come without compulsion and add that new [word illegible] to the innumerous tittles you have to our enthusiasm.

You are sensible, dear general, that I depend always upon your goodness and think you indulge my prattling with you. But I can no more indulge the pleasure I find with [sic] conversing with your excellency. My post horses are ready, and I must proceed to Bordeaux, thence to Bayonne, Perpignan[64] &c. This [word illegible] necessity to spare your time and my nonsense and content myself with assuring your excellency that I am with respect, attachment and gratitude your most humble and obedient servant

lechrdechastellux

I take the liberty to offer my respects and hommage to Mrs. Washington. Be so good, dear general, to recall me to the memory of all the gentlemen of your family. I am happy to know the preferment of colonel Tilghman to the lofty rank of a husband.

22

To Gouverneur Morris, Harvard College Library, Sparks MSS 34. This transcript is an extract only.

Paris, October 11, 1784

I propose having a conversation, shortly, with this minister (M. le Marechal de Castries), who is a man of fine understanding, and full of zeal for the publick good. He honors me with his friendship, and has the goodness to hold my scanty knowledge in some estimation. If he is deceived on this point, he is not deceived, at least, in the belief that I have, in America, a friend, whose talents and mind, like the light-houses placed on promontories, can send their light to the greatest distance.

We will now turn to the subject of your second letter, which is the commerce of our islands. My dear friend, this

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[64]Cities in southern France.

clause will be brief, for you speak with such perfect knowledge of the business, and, what is more wonderful, with such perfect knowledge of our country, that I have no answer to make. You have well remarked, "the principal fault of our government." No, undoubtedly, our laws, our prejudices, our legislation are not calculated to favour commerce. No, doubtless, it is not the profits of individuals, great fortunes, and, to make use of a French expression, the lucky hits which are obtained in this trade, which make the riches of a state. Your comparison of gaming is excellent. In a word, I agree entirely with you in opinion. But, my friend, among us, opinion governs. It acts long, before it takes the form of law. It acts even in opposition to bad laws, when such exist; and when a contest arises between these two principles, it is always victorious. Now, opinion has already changed, and it will change still more. It is daily becoming more favourable to commerce. Besides our commerce had formerly an enemy more dangerous than the nobility, and all ancient prejudices. This foe was finance. Whatever may be the force of prejudice, men always wish to grow rich; now finance offered certain means of doing this; because finance was a troubled stream in which it was easy to angle.

23

ALS to Benjamin Franklin, American Philosophical Society, Franklin Papers, Vol. XXVIII, no. 127.

a Marly le Roi[65] le 30 may 1785[66]

Mon tres cher et tres illustre docteur

J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser la note que je vous ai annoncée. je crois que vous y trouverés de bonnes raisons pour faire obtenir a un homme[67] de beaucoup de mérite une distinction à laquelle il sera tres sensible. je ne le serai pas moins que lui, car je lui ai de grandes obligations dont le plus foible est de m'avoir sauvé la vie dans une maladie que j'ai eue en amerique. dans ce moment cy, il me rend un service plus essentiel en soignant une de mes plus anciennes et de mes meilleures amies qu'il n'a pas quittée depuis 19 jours. seul avec elle a la campagne je ne sai pas ce que je

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[65]Suburb of Paris.

[66]In the American Philosophical Society's Calendar of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin (Philadelphia, 1908), III, 67, this letter is dated May 30, 1783. Chastellux's "3" and "5" is often difficult to distinguish. In as much as this letter is signed "le marquis de Chastellux" it must have been written after January 26, 1784, since this was the date of the death of Chastellux's elder brother and it was only after that date that he signed himself the Marquis de Chastellux. Furthermore, the letter refers to Franklin's approaching return to America, which was in 1785. The date 1785, which I have given, seems preferable.

[67]Dr. Coste.

serois devenu sans lui. sa maladie a commencé le jour même que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous voir a Passy,[68] et comme elle n'est pas encore terminée elle me prive du plaisir de vous porter moi même la note cy jointe.[69] il me semble que si on veut bien considerer en amerique le docteur coste comme ayant conduit des hopitaux absolument americains, ainsi que c'est arrivé après la siege d'York, la decoration qu'on lui accordera ne pourra tirer a consequence. personne n'ayant eté comme lui dans le cas de rendre des services directs et hors de la ligne des services auxiliares. Votre arrivée icy, mon cher docteur, a décidé du bonheur d'un peuple entier, il faut au moins que votre retour en amerique fasse celui de quelque individus. eh! ne vous devés vous pas assés de dedommagemens pour les regrets que vous nous laisserés? j'espere vous voir avant votre depart et mesler mes voeux a ceux que tous les honnetes gens doivent former pour que vous jouissiés longtems de votre gloire, qui est peu de chose a vos yeux, et du bien que vous aves fait, qui est d'un grand prix pour votre coeur.

agreés, mon cher docteur, l'assurance des sentimens tendres et respectueux avec les quels j'ai l'honneur d'etre votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

le Marquis de chastellux

24

ALS to the Chevalier de Romanes (captain in the Regiment of Conti), Bibliothèque de l'Institut, Collection Moulin. Library of Congress photostat.

a Paris le 29 decembre [1785?][70]

S'il est vrai, monsieur que dans la province on n'a pas crû a la guerre, on n'a eté beaucoup plus raisonable qu'a Paris. non que je [word illegible] assurer qu'elle n'aura pas lieu, mais parceque cette opinion tout bien considere, me paroit la meilleure et que c'est toujours quelque chose que d'en [illegible] determiner. rien n'est plus risible que de voir les fluctuations continuelles de Paris sur cet objet. un jour on croit a la guerre, le lendemain la paix n'est pas douteuse, et il y a six semaines que cela dura ainsi. si elle avoit lieu, il y auroit a esperer, monsieur, que les officiers qui comme vous ont des connoissances et des talens ne la [word illegible] pas a se faire connoitre et a obtenir de l'avancement. je serois tres heureux si je pourrois [word illegible] au votre; mais dans ce moment cy je ne vois aucun

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[68] Suburb of Paris in which Franklin lived.

[69] A memoir of Dr. Coste's service in America; cf. Calendar of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin, III, 262.

[70] The page is torn so that the date of the year is missing. Probably 1785, when war seemed imminent between Austria and the Dutch over the barrier fortresses and France was likely to be involved.

moyens de vous faire sortir de votre Regiment. l'etat major se trouvera complette par les officiers qui ont servi en cette qualité soit en amerique soit en europe et quand vous [two words illegible] de faire la guerre plutot comme aide de camp que comme capitaine d'infre vous en pourriés en avoir la permission. je le regrette beaucoup. si je n'avois pas eté obligé de prendre des engagemens avec des [word illegible] tres [word illegible] soyés du moins persuadé, monsieur, que je serai tres aise de profiter de toutes les [word illegible] que pourront me rapprocher de vous et mes [two words illegible] ils vous [word illegible] les sentimens avec les quels j'ai l'honneur d'etre votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

le mis de chastellux

25

ALS to Benjamin Franklin, American Philosophical Society, Franklin Papers, Vol. XXXIV, no. 173⅝.

a Paris le 1er decembre 1786

Mon tres cher et tres illustre President[71]

permettés que j'aye l'honneur de vous recommander le major Lattier gentilhomme irlandois au service de france et maintenant aide de camp du cte Arthur dillon gouverneur de Tobago.[72] je suis persuadé que lorsque vous le connoitrés, vous accorderés a son merite personel l'amitié que je vous demande pour lui dans ce moment cy au nom de celle que vous voulés bien avoir pour moi.

il y a cinq mois, mon cher President, que j'ai adressé à votre excellence, les deux volumes de mes voyages en amerique. si vous aves pris la peine de les lire, vous me ferés grand plaisir de m'envoyer vos observations; car on en fait une sde edition qui sera peut etre suivie d'une troisiéme: et vous savés combien je desire votre suffrage et toute l'importance que je mets a votre opinion.

j'ai recu, il y a deux mois, un diplome de l'academie de Philadelphie[73] que vous avés eu la bonté de m'adresser, mais j'en avois deja un datté de l'année 1781 et je n'ai pas compris comment il pouvoit se faire que j'eusse eté elu une sde fois.[74] quoiqu'il en soit je prie votre excellence d'ofrir mes plus humbles remercimens a la societé qu'a bien voulu m'adopter.

j'ai l'honneur d'etre avec le plus sincere attachement, mon cher President votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

le Mis dechastellux

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[71]Of Pennsylvania. [72]West Indian island, near Trinidad.

[73]The American Philosophical Society.

[74]Cf. J. Bennett Nolan, "Lafayette and the American Philosophical Society," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, LXXIII (1934), 118.

26

AL to Gouverneur Morris, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Etting Papers, European Authors.

a Paris le 16 janvier 1787

le colonel frank partant pour l'amerique j'ai voulu le charger, mon cher ami, d'un exemplaire de mes voyages dont je fais hommage a l'amitié, et aussi a tous les talens qui vous donnent également des droits sur la literature francoise et sur la literature americaine ou angloise. mais c'est tout ce que je peux faire dans ce moment cy que de vous demander votre indulgence et de me recommander a votre souvenir; le colonel frank attend mes paquets et des affaires imprévues m'ont enlevé le tems que je destinois a ces entretiens avec vous. mes voyages sont traduits en anglois et imprimés a Londres. on en fait icy une s^de edition. si vous vouliés ne pas perdre de tems a m'envoyer vos observations, je pourrois encore en faire usage--adieu mon cher morris, n'oubliés pas vos amis d'outremer car ils savent vous aprécier et ils vous sont tendrement attachés.

J'ai recu avec grand plaisir la lettre que vous m'avés ecritte de Virginie. mais j'en attens une de new york.

27

To Gouverneur Morris, Harvard College Library, Sparks MSS 34. This transcript is not complete. It covers pages numbered 9 to 13, but portions of the leaves have been cut out. The mutilations are indicated in the text; division between pages is marked /.

Paris, January 18, 1788

It is a very long time, My dear Morris, since I have written to you, and this is not for want of having thought of you; still less is it, I am sure, for want of interesting matter, to confide to your friendship, whether relating to publick affairs, or to what peculiarly concerns myself. I will begin my protasis with the last-mentioned subject, as the most interesting for two friends, conversing together, at last, after so long a silence. A revolution has been wrought in my destiny, my dear Morris, diametrically opposite to that which has taken place in your country. When I saw you, I was free; I am no longer; or rather I have exchanged a painful & heavy chain for the most gentle bands [remaining half of page 9, top two-thirds of page 10, cut out] / In this sad situation, obliged to be absent from Paris, to attend to my business as inspector, I resolved to visit the waters of Spa,[75] in the interval between my reviews. My soul, my dear Morris, was withered and overwhelmed. I saw nothing, in the remainder of my career, to attach me to life, when that vast concourse of

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[75]Resort town in the Belgian province of Liège.

strangers who assemble at Spa, presented to me one[76] charming in my eyes as in those of all others; but especially fascinating by her mind, & most lovely character. She was Irish, of good family, and about twenty-eight years of age. The first blessing, for which I was indebted / to her, was the recovery of the pleasure of loving, which I believed I had lost forever. The second, the happiness of inspiring in her enough esteem and friendship, to make her consent to unite her fate with mine. I married her, my dear Morris, and for three months, she has made me the happiest of men. [remainder of page 11 cut out] /

It is not my fault if destiny has placed Gouverneur Morris in America, and me in Europe. I have known him, I have loved him; I shall always love him, and my heart will always be drawn towards him. My dear friend, I might say much upon the political affairs of your country and my own. One of these subjects would always be agreeable, but the other would become daily more sad. Quo modo cecidit potens in praelio? You will doubtless exclaim, in learning that we are now without resources at home, and without consideration abroad. Such is, and must ever be, my dear Morris, the fate of a State which has no fixed and rational constitution; and, especially, of a State in which the opinions of men bear no proportion to the government and established usages. This is a critical situation; what will be its issue? I think it will be favourable, at least to our manners. As regards the present; authority is still at war with the parliament, and with the people; but authority without wealth, without credit, either in publick opinion, or the publick purse, is very feeble, even when it seems to make great exertions. We may apply to it those celebrated lines, falsely attributed to Ariosto,

> Il povero nom', che non se n'era accorto,
> Andava combattendo ed era morto.

The Provincial Assemblies might, at length, have formed the basis of a constitution, but they were established under unfavourable auspices, and the parliament which they have so unseasonably alienated says, with some reason,

> Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

I will inform you, my dear Morris, of what is passing in this country, and speak more at length about it, another time. With regard to your new constitution, I wish it good success. Experience has doubtless proved the necessity of a change, but I look upon it as a very bold project to identify, and, if I may so speak, to make a single province, of half a hemisphere [blank, space of three or four words] will be necessary for the voyage of the deputies who will attend the American parliament. As for the rest, I had rather see the famous Torso Belvedere, although it be a mere trunk, than an assemblage of disproportioned, and ill-assorted members. To convince you, my dear Morris, that I have not forgotten America, I send you a work, which I found time to compose last spring.[77] It has

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[76] Marie Plunkett.

[77] Discours sur les avantages ou les dévantages qui résultent, pour l'Europe, de la découverte de l'Amérique (London and Paris, 1787).

met with great success here, and an incident very agreeable to me occurred, relative to it. Custom does not permit the members of the French Academy to become competitors for a prize, adjudged by a provincial Academy. For this reason, I did not send my production to the Academy of Lyons, and I even printed it under a fictitious name. But it so entirely eclipsed all those sent to the Academy, that this body dared not crown one of them, and sent the prize-money to the Abbé Raynal.[78] Adieu, my dear Morris. I embrace you tenderly, and beg your pardon for obliging you to read a letter, certainly too long, since it treats principally of myself.

The marquis de Chastellux

28

AL to unknown, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Conarroe Papers, Vol. VII, p. 39.

Au Raincy[79] le 23 mars 1788

D'une reponse trop tardive
voudrés vous bien vous contenter,
vous dont la muse expeditive
sur tous sujets prète a chanter,
a la fois, piquante et naive
sait aux traits d'une gaieté vive
joindre le talent de flatter.
ah! n'attendés pas qu'au Parnasse
un époux encore dans l'ivresse
d'un bonheur inacoutumé
ofre un encens que sa tendresse
que son amour, ont réclamé.
entre mes rideaux renfermé,
mais sans écouter la paresse
chaque jour je donne à la presse
des ouvrages très bien limé.
quant aux graves personages
dont votre imagination
par une heureuse fiction
me fait parvenir les hommages,
il faudra bien de ma maison
en exclurre un, et pour raison.
Jadis, et j'en ai survenance,
je fis avec lui connoissance;
mais a dire verité,
quoique je dusse etre flatté
des soins que dans un age tendre
de moi ce seigneur voulut prendre,
j'ai trop de generosité
trop de noblesse, pour prétendre
qu'il s'occupe à me faire rendre

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[78] G.-T. Raynal, French philosophe, donor of the prize offered by the Academy of Lyons.

[79] Suburb of Paris.

ce qu'a mes amis j'ai prêté.
dans la commune banqueroute
je préfere d'etre compris
mais, s'il faut suivre la route
qu'enfilent les autres maris,
muses! obtenés de ce pris
que le forfait que je redoute
par un fendant ne soit commis
et que je soit, quoiqu'il m'en coute,
fait connu par vos favoris.

Je ne sais, monsieur, si vous comprenés tout ce qu'un pareil souhait a d'obligeant pour vous mais j'ose a peine me livrer a un moment de gaité en vous ecrivant. mes vers ne seront jamais assés bon pour meriter que vous me pardonniés mes torts. ma meilleure excuse est la vie que je mene icy avec une femme dont la renomée vous a fait un portrait fidel; avec une princesse[80] aussi aimable que respectable, qui forcée de passer l'hiver a la campagne ne s'occupe que de le rendre agreable et repasse [?] toute sa journée a la société. les heures de retraitte sont courtes et n'arrivent qu'a celle entre carnival [et?] souper, car nous ne dinons qu'a cinq heures, et on ne peut aller chez soi qu'a neuf heures pour se rassembler encore entre dix et onze. avec des affaires consacrés, avec des gens delicats on ne fait rien qui vaille a la lumiére et apres le diner c'est le s^{t} jour de Paque que je prends pour mes écrits, au retour d'une grande messe de village. comme j'ai beaucoup d'absolutions a vous demander le tems m'est favorable. j'arriverai, car il me faut rien taire à la confession pascale que la vie que j'ai mené est bonne presque je puis a ville [passage illegible] ou en Raincy qui n'a pas permis de donner toutes les suites necessaires aux soins que je voulois prendre pour la vie d'antigoné. Prault[81] pour cinq mois etoit surchargé d'ouvrages. Il n'a pas eu la loisir d'examiner tout ce manuscript et de la comparer au memoires. [illegible] d'un plan favorable la premiere fois que je passerai deux jours de suitte a Paris, j'en raisonerai encore avec lui. croiriés vous que ce n'est qu'hier matin, qu'ayant fait une course de trois heures à Paris j'avais passé deux dans mon cabinet, croiriés vous disje, que ce n'est que dans un moment qu'ayant amassé des papiers j'ai retrouvé la petite cahier que j'ai l'honneur de vous adressé en vous repetant ce que je vous ai deja dit, qu'un ouvrage qui portent tous l'emprunts de l'esprit et de talent, n'auroient besoin que de quelques corrections pour paroitre avant janvier [?] dans le public. j'ignore quelles consequences auroit pour votre amusement le changement instant [?]. mais vous deves etre bien sur monsieur que je serai toujours [illegible] a vous donner les preuves de mon sincere attachement.

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[80]The Duchesse d'Orléans.

[81]Prault was the Parisian publisher who brought out the authorized editions of Chastellux's Voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale dans les années 1780, 1781 & 1782 (Paris, 1786).